



PRESS RELEASE
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Operation “Street Sweeper” Cleans up Drug Dealers in Baldwin

U.S. Attorney Paul I. Perez, Thomas Raffanello, Special Agent in Charge of the Miami Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration, and Chief Harvey Branch of the Baldwin Police Department announced today the round-up of five alleged drug dealers who were arrested this morning in **Operation “Street Sweeper.”** Early this morning federal, state, and local law enforcement officers from the Northeast Florida High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Force swept through the Baldwin community arresting five individuals who have been charged in five separate federal indictments with drug dealing in the Baldwin area. (See attachment for names and charges of those indicted and arrested)

In April of 2003, the Northeast Florida HIDTA Task Force initiated an investigation into crack cocaine trafficking in Baldwin. Undercover agents made a series of purchases from a number of alleged Baldwin mid-level crack cocaine drug dealers. In addition to today’s arrest, forfeiture proceedings will begin on two automobiles and a residential dwelling in Baldwin.

The Northeast Florida HIDTA Task Force combines the resources of several federal, state and local agencies and provides smaller communities such as Baldwin with expanded law enforcement capabilities. Members of the Northeast Florida HIDTA Task Force include: DEA, Baldwin Police Department, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, Baker County Sheriff's Office, Jacksonville Beach Police Department, Nassau County Sheriff's Office, Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

"I promised the people of Baldwin that if necessary I would walk every street in our community to clean up illegal drugs in our fine city. Operation Street Sweeper is part of my commitment to make this a safer community. I want to thank the Task Force for their support in this effort," said Baldwin Police Chief Harvey Branch.

"Today's round-up is a major accomplishment for the citizens of Baldwin. The impact of this operation should have a significant effect," said Randy Bohman, Assistant Special Agent in Charge at the Jacksonville District Office.

"I want to commend the Task Force for their efforts and especially thank Chief Brown for his leadership in helping stem the flow of illegal drugs in Baldwin," stated U.S. Attorney Paul I. Perez.

This case will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney D. Rodney Brown.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty.

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<i>Defendant's Name</i>	<i>Defendant's Address</i>	<i>Defendant's DOB</i>	<i>Defendant's Age</i>	<i>Charges</i>	<i>Penalties</i>
Christopher Lashawn Brown a/k/a "Mudd"	Baldwin, Florida	May 24, 1975	28	Ct. 1: Distribution of "Crack" Cocaine Ct. 2: Distribution of "Crack" Cocaine Ct. 3: Distribution of "Crack" Cocaine	At least 5 yrs. and up to 40 yrs. imprisonment
Sim Franklin a/k/a "Snake"	Baldwin, Florida	November 24, 1964	39	Ct. 1: Distribution of "Crack" Cocaine Ct. 2: Distribution of "Crack" Cocaine Ct. 3: Distribution of "Crack" Cocaine	At least 5 yrs. and up to 40 yrs. imprisonment
Willie Hill, Jr.	Baldwin, Florida	October 16, 1937	66	Ct. 1: Distribution of "Crack" Cocaine Ct. 2: Distribution of "Crack" Cocaine Ct. 3: Distribution of "Crack" Cocaine	At least 5 yrs. and up to 40 yrs. imprisonment
Earl Johnson, Jr.	Baldwin, Florida	June 7, 1973	30	Ct. 1: Distribution of "Crack" Cocaine Ct. 2: Distribution of "Crack" Cocaine Ct. 3: Distribution of "Crack" Cocaine	At least 5 yrs. and up to 40 yrs. imprisonment
Christopher Thomas a/k/a "Bobby"	t Baldwin, Florida	April 12, 1951	52	Ct. 1: Distribution of "Crack" Cocaine Ct. 2: Distribution of "Crack" Cocaine	At least 5 yrs. and up to 40 yrs. imprisonment